

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 2, 4 through 13, 15 through 19, and 21 through 24 are presented for examination in the present application upon entry of the instant Preliminary Amendment.

The specification has been amended to include the headings required by MPEP 608.01(a). The abstract of the disclosure has been amended in conformance with the requirements of MPEP 608.01(b).

The claims have been amended to conform to U.S. practice. Specifically, the claims have been amended to remove reference numerals, to include the transitional phrase "comprising" and/or "wherein" as appropriate, to remove multiple dependencies, to provide proper antecedent basis to all claim elements, and to provide proper verb tense for all method steps.

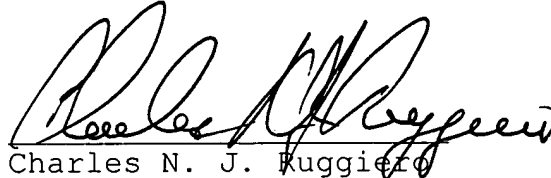
These claim amendments merely make explicit what had been implicit in the claims and, thus, should not affect the scope of equivalents to which the claims are entitled.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for examination. Applicants respectfully request favorable consideration and passage of this application to allowance.

If for any reason the Examiner feels that consultation with Applicants' attorney would be helpful in the advancement of the prosecution, the Examiner is invited to call the telephone number below for an interview.

Respectfully submitted,

March 11, 2005

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Charles N. J. Ruggiero", is written over the typed name.

Charles N. J. Ruggiero

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